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ABSTRACT1

This paper discusses the development and evolution of the University of Maryland's UniversityCenter in downtown Baltimore since its conception in 1991. UniversityCenter is a geographic location, one of six downtown districts that resulted from Baltimore's latest development plan. It contains not only the University of Maryland's Baltimore campus, but the University of Maryland Medical System, the Veteran's Affairs Medical Center, historical residential neighborhoods, the Health Sciences Museum, and various other public and private facilities. The vision for the UniversityCenter is the creation of a neighborhood that: (1) conveys a sense of campus community, linking centers of intellectual, research, service, and social activity; (2) serves as the western gateway to downtown Baltimore; (3) offers visitors a welcoming atmosphere; (4) is seen as adjacent to Oriole Park at Camden Yards and the Inner Harbor; and (5) is easily and comfortably accessible by foot, car, and mass transit. Environmental, design, and public relations aspects of UniversityCenter development, as well as implications for other university communities, are also discussed. Includes the signage and site furnishings plans for the UniversityCenter. (MDM)

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Baltimore's UniversityCenter

**The Process of Developing a University Neighborhood
in a Downtown Urban Environment: Baltimore's UniversityCenter**

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**SCUP 29
San Francisco
July 26, 1994**

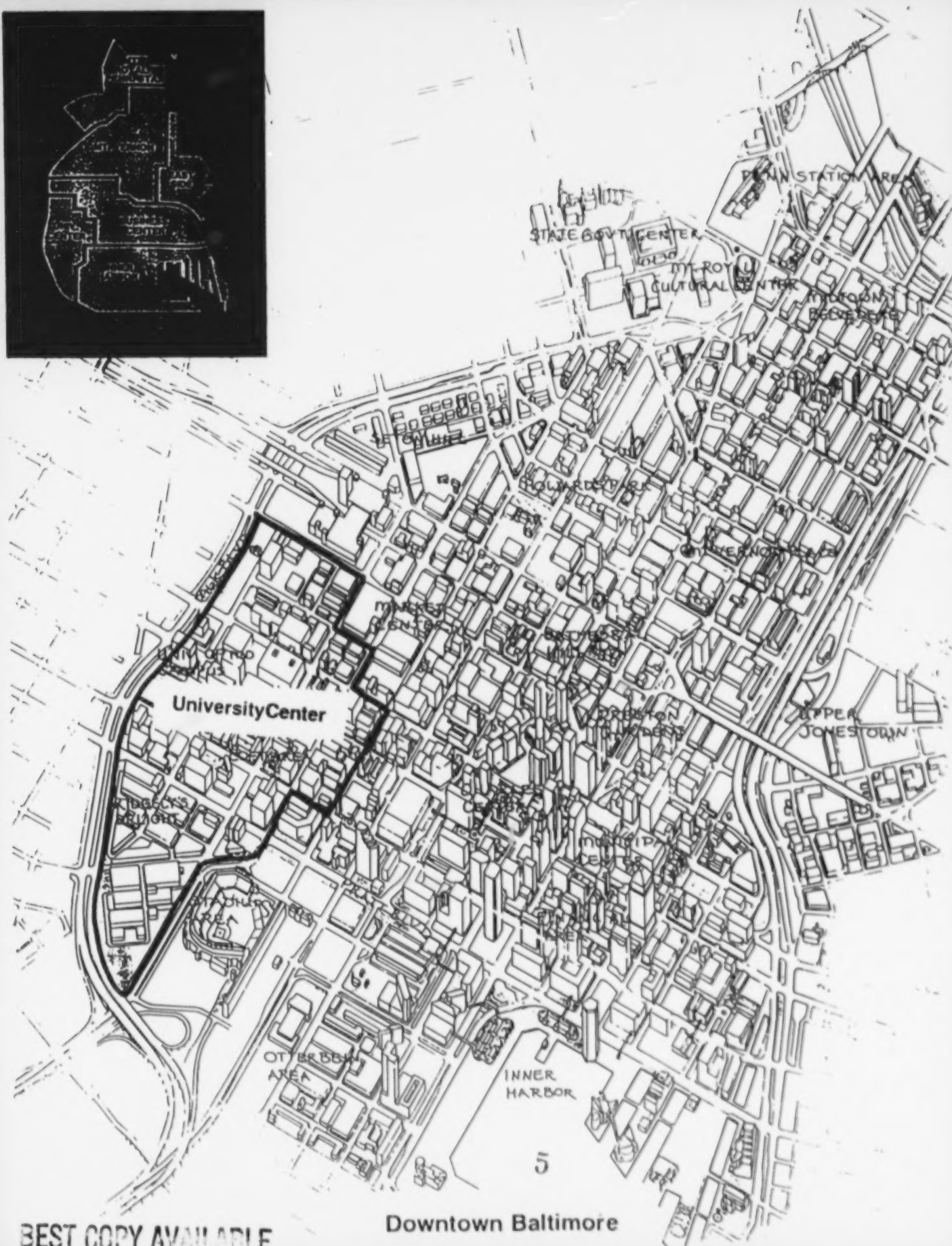
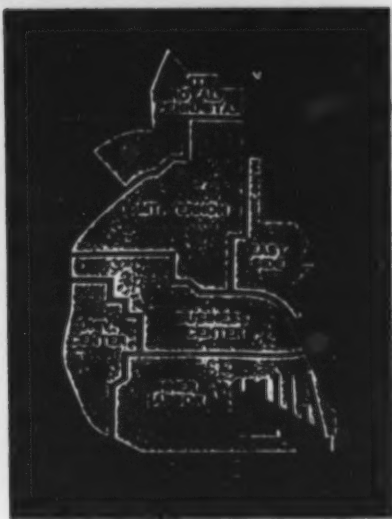
BALTIMORE'S UNIVERSITYCENTER

IA. Setting

UniversityCenter (created in 1992) is located in downtown Baltimore. But, before we focus on a description of UniversityCenter and its evolution, it would be useful to describe the framework in which it exists.

Baltimore City is the economic center of the state, and downtown Baltimore is the economic engine that drives the city and the Metropolitan region. It contains two major academic health centers and several universities, enabling the region to claim itself as a center of technology and education.

Until a few years ago, downtown Baltimore was narrowly defined as the area around the Inner Harbor and the financial district. Much of the redevelopment was focused in this area with the city and state's attention. The western sector, which contains the University of Maryland at Baltimore, was continually overlooked. Then, financial difficulties hit the city and state--development in that area slowed considerably. The vision of a new ballpark in the southwestern sector of the city became a reality; and, the only construction occurring in the city was concentrated on the University of Maryland at Baltimore campus, just west of the traditional downtown boundaries. To capture this hub of activity as part of the downtown area, the boundaries were expanded to the north and west to include the University of



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Downtown Baltimore

Maryland at Baltimore campus.

Today, **UniversityCenter** is considered the western gateway to downtown Baltimore:

- * We are located just to the north of the new Oriole Park at Camden Yards
- * Along the west, there is a major north-south traffic artery used to enter and exit Baltimore City.
- * And, on the north we are bounded by the historic Lexington Market and the federal Social Security complex.
- * Finally, **UniversityCenter** is only four blocks from the famous Inner Harbor.

I. Introduction to **UniversityCenter**

UniversityCenter is not an institution but a geographic location. It is one of the six downtown Baltimore districts that resulted from Baltimore's latest development plan. It is intended to be mixed use, with a focus on the life sciences and dominated by:

- the **University of Maryland at Baltimore** that is the professional schools' campus of the University of Maryland System. Located on the campus are the schools of Dentistry, Law, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Social Work, Baltimore Graduate School, and the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems. It is the founding site of the entire University of Maryland System; UMAB is the largest land

owner in the **UniversityCenter** district having 36 acres.

- the **University of Maryland Medical System**, a private 700-bed medical teaching hospital that includes outpatient clinics, a children's center, a cancer center, and Shock Trauma.
- the **Veterans' Affairs Medical Center**, a 324-bed, one million square foot facility used as a teaching hospital.

Other elements of **UniversityCenter** include:

- **University Physicians**, a private practice arm of the UMAB medical faculty and hospital clinical staff.
- the historic residential neighborhood of **Ridgeley's Delight**, an area of restored nineteenth century row houses.
- the **historic loft district**, a nineteenth century factory lofts have been converted into apartments and/or offices.

In total, **UniversityCenter** has 121 acres of land.

- * Each year well over \$110 million in externally funded research is conducted in **UniversityCenter** and this number continues to grow.
- * Within the **UniversityCenter** bounds there are over 20,000 individuals on any given day studying, working, conducting research, teaching, giving and receiving health care services.
- * Construction is at an all time high in the area:

Penn Street Garage - a 900-car facility that includes 11,000 square feet of office space on the first floor, incorporates the

retention and restoration of the facade of an 1890's electrical power station.

Gudelsky Inpatients Tower - a 156-bed addition to the hospital that includes facilities for many diagnostic and treatment units, as well.

Health Sciences Facility - a 162,619 square foot research facility for the School of Medicine; total cost \$57,645,000.

Medical Biotechnology Center - a 196,000 square foot facility designed to strengthen interdisciplinary research and to stimulate interaction with private industry; it includes incubator laboratories; total cost \$53,000,000.

Health Sciences Library - 168,500 square foot facility that includes space for the campus information services division; total cost \$32,000,000.

Health Sciences Museum, Phase I - renovation of an old University building to house a national dental museum; total cost \$5,800,000.

And these are only the buildings funded for UMAB; many other buildings are planned and expect to be funded during the next five years, including a new School of Nursing Facility that has been appropriated design funds.

Why was UniversityCenter developed?

UniversityCenter was developed to create a secure place or community around the university, the hospital and the Veterans Administration Medical Center.

Since its formal recognition as a campus in the late 1960's, the University of Maryland at

Baltimore has had an identity crisis, mainly due to its evolution. Each of our schools, except the School of Social Work, was an independent institution before coming under the University of Maryland umbrella. For many years these schools functioned independently. This independent nature continues to exist today to a large extent although leadership and the UniversityCenter concepts are working to develop a more cohesive campus.

Physically, the buildings UMAB own and occupy are a heterogeneous of style and material that, except for our oldest historic buildings (and now, our newest buildings), are architecturally nondescript. The spaces between buildings and the public open space areas (sidewalks and streets) did not contain any hint of being on a university campus.

The hospital suffered from a related condition. Until 1986 it was part of the University of Maryland at Baltimore with its director reporting to the campus chancellor. Baltimore and the surrounding region viewed it as nothing more than a state hospital--definitely second rate compared to the prestigious Johns Hopkins University across town. When the hospital became independent, it fiercely embraced privatization while working to maintain its relationship with UMAB. It also had to compete in a very aggressive health care market to attract patients if it was to remain financially solvent. Its physical plant was old and unattractive and, perceptually, it was viewed as located in a rundown, questionable environment. Of course, this was not true; the UMAB campus has always been one of the safest, if not the safest, locations in all of downtown Baltimore City.

Thus, the need to create the secure place was acute. It became apparent, especially to the hospital, that perceptions needed to change if a positive campus community were to evolve. The real question was how to make it happen sooner rather than later.

III. Evolution of UniversityCenter

So, why did UniversityCenter take off? UniversityCenter evolution soared because interest in improving the area became pervasive. Four concurrent master planning processes pointed to the need for the formation of a community like UniversityCenter.

1. In 1991, the University of Maryland at Baltimore completed its campus master plan. This plan recognized the need for a campus community. It was recommended that this be accomplished through a series of design guidelines for the campus that when implemented would begin to link facilities and create attractive open spaces.
2. At the same time, the hospital's facility expansion plan was completed. Among other things, this underlined urgent need to alter common perception that our medical center existed in the least secure area of Baltimore City.
3. Meanwhile, the City of Baltimore was putting the finishing touches on its downtown 20-year strategy plan entitled, "The Renaissance Continues." This plan called for the expansion of the area encompassed by downtown Baltimore and the creation of six development districts, one of which was UniversityCenter. It urged the institutions within our new district to work together maximizing development opportunities.

4. Baltimore City's Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Baltimore Committee, completed a vision for Baltimore as a Life Sciences Community, with the University of Maryland at Baltimore on the west and Johns Hopkins University on the east serving as anchors.

Was this enough to make UniversityCenter happen? No--just because the plans pointed toward the need for a campus community and a sense of safety-- this did not mean that it would happen.

The key ingredient, or catalyst, was the setting of the new ballpark just to the south of the UMAB campus. Our Governor Schaefer is from Baltimore; before becoming Governor, he was the Mayor of Baltimore City for 15-years. For many of those years he felt that the western sector of the downtown area needed to be improved. Governor Schaefer is a visual person. He felt the area around UMAB and the hospital was not pleasant for passing through to the Oriole Park at Camden yards.

When the CEO of the hospital approached the Governor with a funding request for \$50 million, the Governor responded positively. However, UMMS and UMAB would have to work together to improve the campus community. Hence, the impetus for the university and the hospital work cooperatively to create UniversityCenter and to commit scarce resources for improvements such as, attractive sidewalks, signage, landscaping and marketing/public relations events.

So, in early 1991 a small work group comprising university and hospital staff assembled to build the framework for UniversityCenter. We had the opening of the new ballpark in April 1992 as our first big deadline. We wanted and needed to have some visible changes in place for the Governor to see and point to when he attended Opening Day.

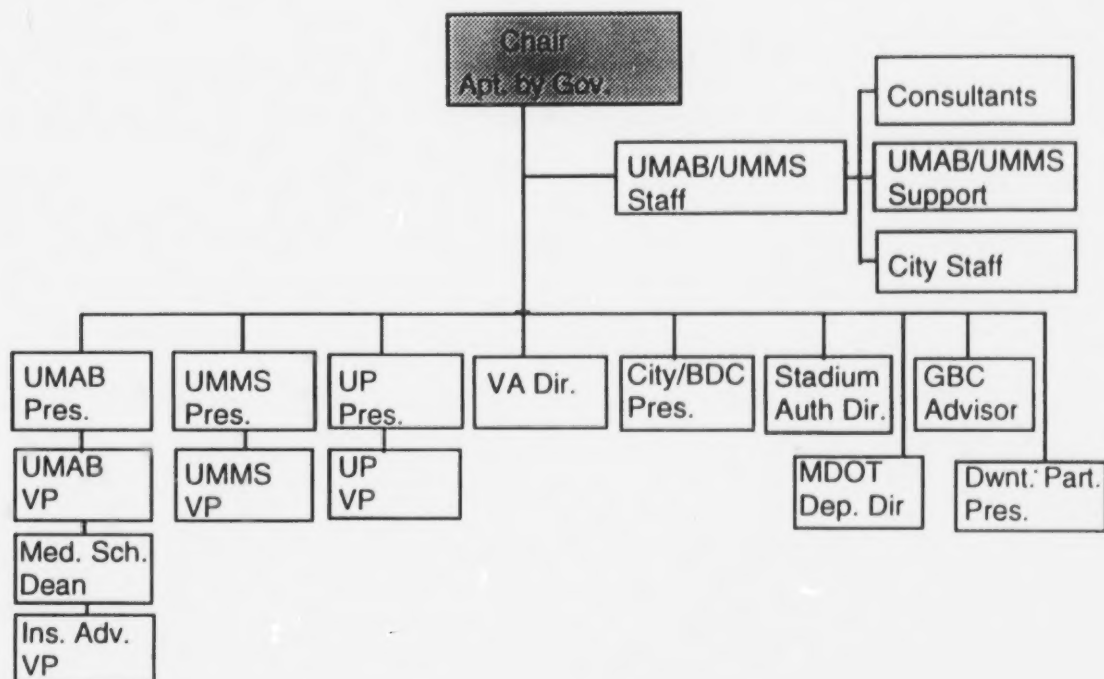
The discussions centered around how to gain support and commitment from the CEO's of the member institutions and from key state and local officials. In other words, the politics of forming UniversityCenter. It was critical that UniversityCenter compliment both institutions, and be broad enough for other institutions and constituents in the area to identify and feel comfortable.

The work group developed a draft plan for UniversityCenter that included recommended committee members, an ongoing work group to act as staff to the committee, a set of goals and objectives, and a work plan for the first year. Much of the negotiating was completed at this level. By the time the principals were seated around the table, they reached agreement quickly.

IV. Decision Making Process

To move the process forward the UniversityCenter Advisory Committee was formed and began operating in 1991. The chair is a member of the Governor's staff. A small staff support the committee and carry out the work. Other members are the CEO's of the hospital, UMAB, University Physicians, and VAMC, the executive directors of the Stadium Authority

UniversityCenter Advisory Committee



Chair, Deputy Secretary Department of Employment & Economic Development

UMAB = University of Maryland at Baltimore

UMMS= University of Maryland Medical System

UP = Universty Physicians

VA = Veterans Affairs

BDC = Baltimore Development Corporation

GBC= Greater Baltimore Committee

MDOT = Maryland Department of Transportation

Dwnt. Part. = Downtown Partnership

and the Downtown Partnership (a City Agency focused on marketing, public relations and site improvements in downtown Baltimore), a senior member of Baltimore City's Chamber of Commerce, an Assistant Secretary of the Department of State Planning, and the President of the Baltimore Redevelopment Corporation (representing the Mayor of Baltimore City).

The members attend the meetings and participate with enthusiasm. However, when decisions need to be made the members look to the university and the hospital for guidance and finality.

V. Vision, Goals and Objectives

One of the first actions the Advisory Committee completed was to establish a vision and set of goals for the district; that when implemented would result in a university neighborhood that is attractive, vibrant and safe. The vision for UniversityCenter is the creation of a neighborhood that:

- * conveys a sense of campus community, linking centers of intellectual, research and development, service, and social activity.
- * serves as the western gateway to downtown Baltimore.
- * offers visitors a welcoming atmosphere.
- * is seen as adjacent to Oriole Park at Camden Yards and the Inner Harbor (this one, so obvious to everyone, was important as a way of erasing the imaginary boundary between the campus

and the rest of downtown).

- * is easily and comfortably accessible by foot, car and mass transit.

To realize this vision the following goals were adopted by the Advisory Committee and used to guide UniversityCenter's development:

- * Establish a set of coherent, quality design standards for public environments.
- * Create appropriate design linkages to the Ballpark and the Inner Harbor.
- * Develop more visible identification of campus gateways and buildings.
- * Improve signs facilitating access to and on the campus.
- * Establish a UniversityCenter Visitor Information Center to orient visitors and patients to the area.
- * Support Baltimore's economic development goals in the life sciences sector.
- * Encourage development of ancillary commercial activity that is consistent with the district's purpose.
- * Launch the UniversityCenter's identity through a communications/community relations program including special events, public relations and marketing.

VI. The Plan

The task of creating UniversityCenter and addressing its goals was approached from two different disciplines: environmental design and marketing. We felt strongly that this two-pronged approach was necessary if UniversityCenter was to become a recognizable landmark and destination within the City of Baltimore. During the first phase of work, consulting firms were employed to work with the Advisory Committee to develop master plans for each discipline. The environmental design consultants were Wallace, Roberts and Todd in conjunction with graphic designers, Cloud and Gehshan. The marketing consultant was Trahan, Burden and Charles, a Baltimore based firm specializing in promoting cities. Each firm brought a unique quality to the project. Their work was done simultaneously with a significant amount of interaction throughout the process.

The consultants' first task was to develop the overall theme for the community. The Advisory Committee directed them to look toward the future and not to dwell on the past and color was an important consideration. The members wanted bright colors to stand out against our brick buildings and landscaping statements that would soften and enhance the existing environment. The Advisory Committee rejected the first suggestions made by the environmental design consultants that were soft blues, greens and purple. Instead, they chose vibrant red, purple and white against a metallic aluminum background.

The marketing consultants then devised UniversityCenter as the "Neighborhood of Discovery." The environmental design consultants took that concept and combined it with

the life sciences community image to arrive at the double helix structure of the DNA molecule as the basis from which to draw inspiration. This helix shape has been translated into exterior signs and banners.

Environmental Plan

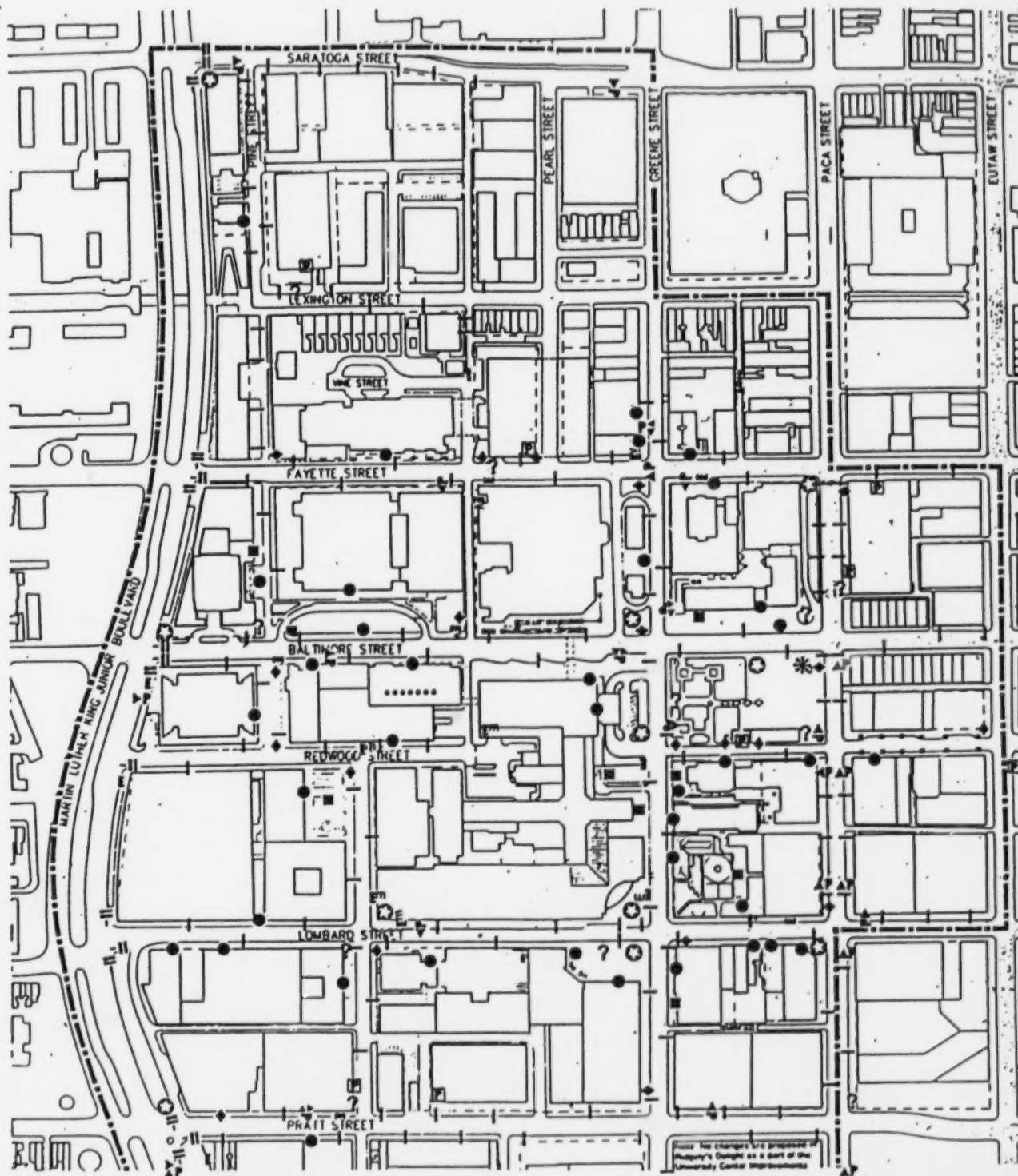
The development of the environmental design plan started with the UMAB Facilities Master Plan Design Guidelines as its basis. The Advisory Committee was asked to accept or reject parts or all of the plan. The accepted portions of the design guidelines were extended to include all land within the UniversityCenter neighborhood boundaries. The consultants incorporated the helix concept and translated it into a total exterior way-finding sign program for the neighborhood that addressed vehicular and pedestrian traffic needs. Further, the way-finding system begins, in some places, at the periphery of Baltimore City with the use of trailblazers that direct people to the bounds of UniversityCenter. At that point, vehicular traffic is directed to our public access garages (patients and visitors) and pedestrians are directed to our various buildings and neighboring attractions.

The biggest complaint we have heard over the years about UMAB is that visitors never knew when they were on campus and when they were not. Another was that UMAB and hospital buildings were not easily recognizable. To a visitor, they all looked similar. It was not uncommon to find patients wandering or asking directions to various clinic facilities. The exterior way-finding sign program successfully addresses these concerns. It also works to identify the UniversityCenter community within the downtown.

The signs are aluminum and speak for the high-tech nature of the activities occurring within the district. The program includes the following sign types:

- * Trailblazers
- * Banners
- * Gateway signs
- * Parking directional signs
- * Parking garage identification signs
- * Pedestrian directional signs
- * Map directories and kiosks
- * Institutional Identity
- * Building identification (wall mounted and free standing)

Two other sign types should be mentioned. They were not part of our original environmental design plan, but were added later at the suggestion of the Advisory Committee. The first is a very large neon skyline sign located on the south facing the penthouse wall of our tallest building. This simple UniversityCenter sign can be seen from Oriole Park at Camden Yards, from Interstate 95 and other distant places in the city. Newspaper articles have been written about it, legislators recognize it, ambulance drivers and other emergency personnel use it as a locator, and it is fast becoming a Baltimore City landmark. The other sign type is directional in nature. The Federal Highway Administration has placed UniversityCenter exit indicator signs along the north and southbound shoulders of Interstate 95. This has helped out-of-town patients, students and visitors to find the neighborhood.



Signage Plan

- Vehicular Signs**
- Skyline Neon
 - ⊙ Gateway / Institutional Pylon
 - Martin Luther King Banner
 - Banner
 - Small Banner
 - * Large Gateway Pylon

- AP Parking Directional
- EM Emergency Room Directional-UM
- EV Emergency Room Directional-VA
- PG Parking Garage Identification

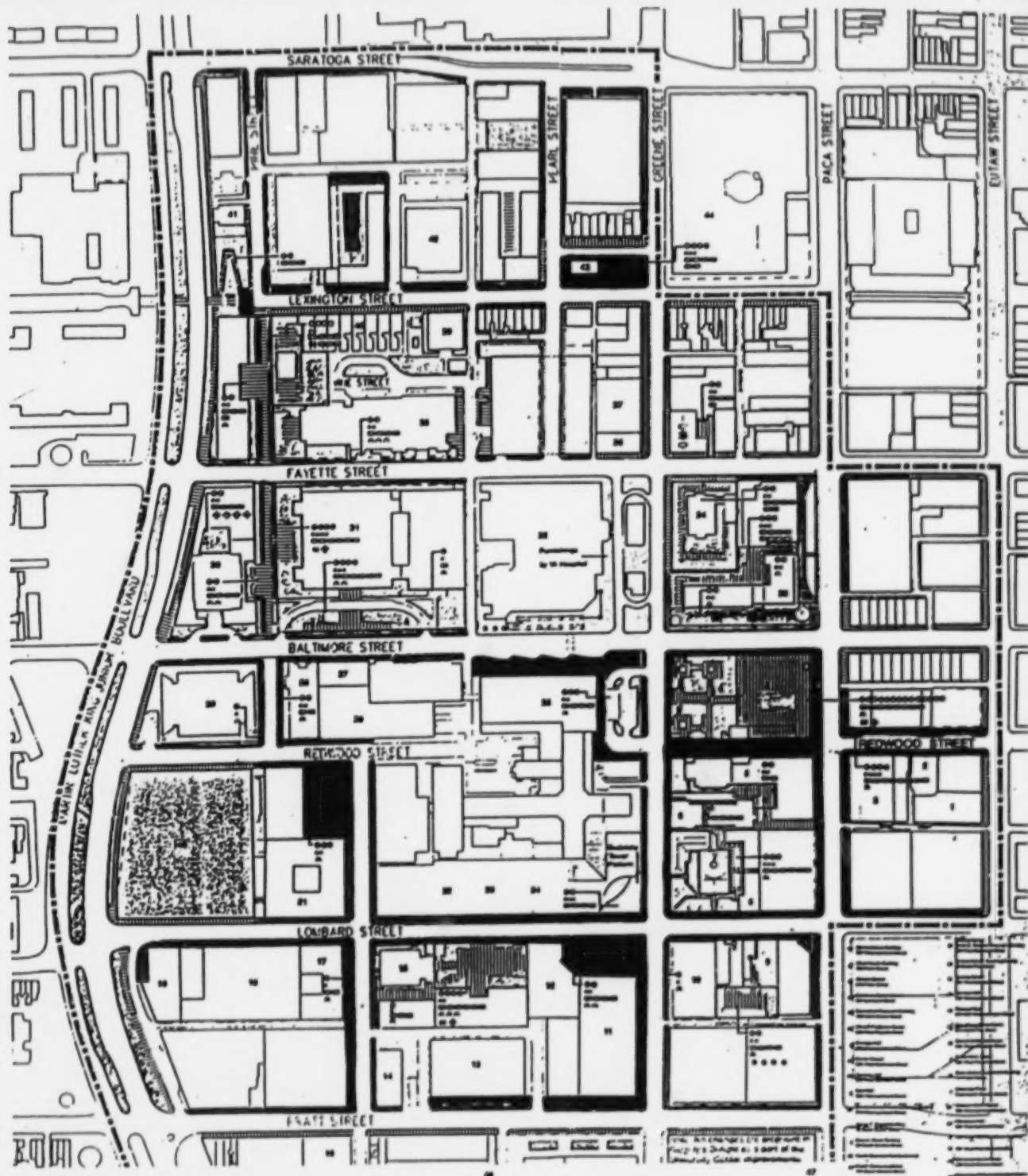
Approx. 75% Completed

- Pedestrian Signs**
- ? Map Directory
 - ◆ Pedestrian Directional
 - Building Identification
 - Image-Building Element
 - ◇ Life Science Achievement Award Plaques (Exact locations to be determined)
 - Display Panel

University Center
Environmental Design Program
Baltimore, Maryland
August 1988

UniversityCenter

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Paving and Site Furnishings Plan

University Center
Environmental Design Program
William G. Gandy & Son
Architects
17 August 1988

UniversityCenter

Because UniversityCenter is a dense urban environment, we do not have the luxury of abundant large open green spaces. Instead, UniversityCenter planned for an open space network of sidewalks and streets linking small parks and plazas with the schools and institutions. This use of the sidewalks and spaces between buildings may not be unique, but it was a major departure for our institutions from working solely inside, to thinking about the environment outside their building walls.

Standards were adopted for sidewalks, pedestrian level lighting, street furniture and landscaping. Each of these elements is intended to mark the neighborhood, so that it becomes easily identified as a campus within the city. At the same time, the landscaping and signs will render UniversityCenter attractive and inviting while enhancing safety.

Marketing and Public Relations Plan

The plan for marketing and public relations addresses the issue of identity and safety on two levels -- internal and external audiences. This is necessary since the issues were and still are different. On the external side the issues center around a lack of knowledge and understanding about the institutions within UniversityCenter and the neighborhood surrounding it. But, the internal marketing strategies need to attack the invisible barriers that exist between the institutions and schools. Also, they need to instill a sense of pride for what exists and happens beyond the immediate institution/ school structures.

External Goals:

- * Educate the public and create an awareness of the name,

boundaries and components of Baltimore's newest neighborhood.

- * Showcase **UniversityCenter** as an attractive, comfortable, and safe neighborhood; and, generate a positive disposition toward the area and its institutions.
- * Promote the excellence of **UniversityCenter** and its institutions.
- * Establish **UniversityCenter** as a "Neighborhood of Discovery" where great study, research and work are performed.
- * Underscore the importance of **UniversityCenter** to the welfare of the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland.
- * Create an environment in which **UniversityCenter**'s institutions can more effectively interact with the city's/state's business community and seek private sector support for research, growth and development.
- * Position **UniversityCenter** as a primary anchor and major physical manifestation of Baltimore's Life Sciences vision.

Internal Marketing:

- * Educate the members of the **UniversityCenter** community and create awareness of the name, boundaries and components of Baltimore's newest neighborhood.
- * Create an attractive, comfortable and safe environment for students, faculty and staff.
- * Encourage students, faculty and staff to take pride in their

neighborhood and the great study, research and work performed on campus.

- * Establish a "sense of campus" and promote cooperation and interaction between the institutions and schools that make up UniversityCenter.
- * Create animation on the UniversityCenter campus.

These goals are to be accomplished through a series of annual events and publications. We were cautioned by our consultants that name recognition and a sense of place or community could not be accomplished in the short term. These were goals that would take many years to accomplish. Yet, we have been very successful with some goals. UniversityCenter is a known area of Baltimore and is used regularly when describing the location of the university, the hospital and other institutional residents. Further, much of the campus community talks about being a part of UniversityCenter. UniversityCenter is said with pride.

VII. Implementation

All plans take money to implement and the UniversityCenter environmental and marketing plans are no different. The estimated total investment for the environmental improvements plan is \$10 million. The investment for the marketing plan is not as high, but will be an ongoing annual expense for several years to come (about \$80,000 a year).

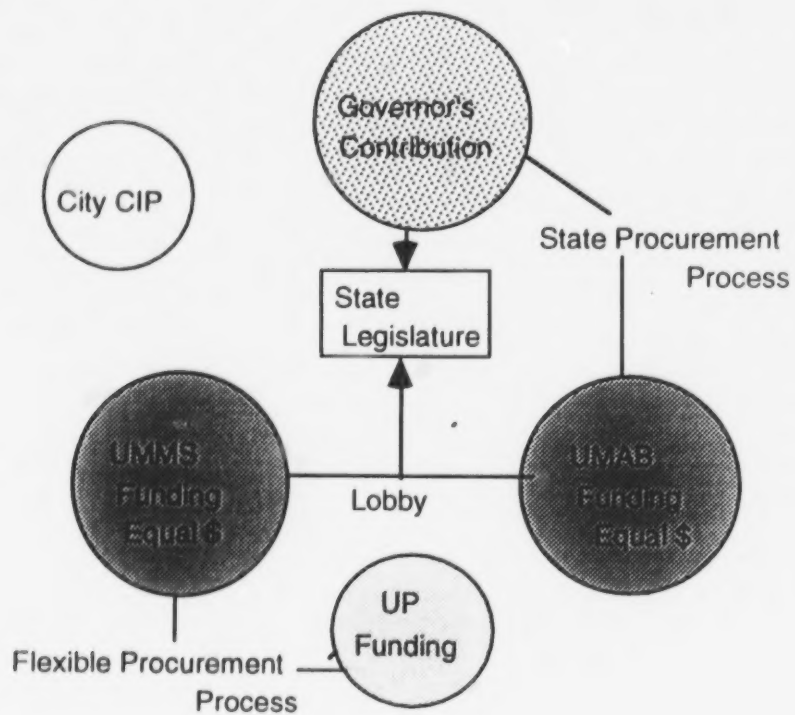
The University and the hospital have agreed to equally fund UniversityCenter's development.

Each year the two institutions make commitments for environmental improvements based on a five-year plan approved by the Advisory Committee. Marketing and public relations events are funded annually as well, with funding levels based on approved yearly plans. To augment the amount of work we accomplish in a given year, additional funding is sought from other sources such as the city, state, and other member groups. This has been fairly successful and we have completed more projects than originally anticipated.

The evolution for UniversityCenter could not have happened at a worse time in our budget. The state of Maryland, and thus the university, was in the middle of a funding crisis. Employees were being laid off and budgets trimmed. But, in every other arena there was no better time, for example, because the new ball park focused attention on West Baltimore, the university, and the hospital.

Here, it is worth pointing out the obvious. If a plan is going to be funded and implemented, it needs the support and attention of the leadership group. We kept this at the forefront of our implementation strategy and used the Advisory Committee efficiently and effectively. Because the Advisory Committee had been an active participant in the development of the plans, it was eager to see results. To hasten the implementation, the Advisory Committee chair suggested tapping into the state's capital budgeting process to contribute to the environmental improvements. This idea was suggested to the "right" people in our State government. The Governor's Office agreed to support an annual request of \$500,000 each year for a five-year period. The legislature was not as enamored of the project. During the

UniversityCenter Yearly Budget



first two request years, the project was cut from the budget and put back in on a daily basis until the end of the legislative session. It took strong lobbying efforts. To secure capital funding it was important to down-play the "beautification" aspects of the plan and emphasize the safety improvement aspects. This year our capital request was well received with no negative responses. Several of our most vocal opponents said the campus was "looking good," and readily appropriated funds. We are hopeful that this capital funding will continue for at least three more years.

Other members of the Advisory Committee have used their influence to encourage the City of Baltimore to install the UniversityCenter banners, repave roadways, address traffic issues, and clean up the areas along UniversityCenter's borders. The Mass Transit Administration was convinced to name a light rail stop for UniversityCenter, and even funded the design of a neighborhood map that could be used for not only the light rail but also for our own map kiosks and brochures.

With so many funding sources, it has been quite a chore keeping track of who's paying for what and which procurement practices need to be followed. We have become very creative budget managers.

Each year additional signs are installed, more sidewalks are repaved and lighted with pedestrian-level lighting and new areas are landscaped and more is under design. There is a banner program that calls for the replacement of old worn banners on an annual or as needed

basis. A maintenance program for signs and landscaping is being instituted to ensure their continued attractiveness and usefulness.

Implementation of the marketing and public relations plan has been moving forward, as well.

We have instituted:

- * **Family Day**, intended for the UniversityCenter community, involving a picnic on campus followed by an Orioles Game at nearby Camden Yards
- * **Fun on the Plaza**, parties throughout the year with themes and purposes such as welcoming the VAMC, our newest neighbor.
- * **Life Sciences Achievement Award**, to honor a UniversityCenter faculty member, student, staff or alumni for outstanding achievement in helping Baltimore realize its life sciences vision.
- * **Discovery Tours**, when high school students visit representatives from various UniversityCenter institutions in their work environments to learn about educational and career opportunities in the health and human services.
- * **Partnerships**, providing various opportunities to cultivate relationships with new and existing partners (state government, city government, business community) for example, hosting business over breakfast, Governor's cabinet meetings, Mayor's

cabinet meetings.

- * **UniversityCenter Security Task Force**, headed by UMAB's Security chief, this group pulls together all security and police forces in **UniversityCenter** and the areas surrounding it to promote cooperation, sharing of resources and enhancing safety.

VIII. Benefits of UniversityCenter

The development of **UniversityCenter** serves many purposes:

- * **UniversityCenter** as a concept, has given the member institutions a forum for working cooperatively; this may be a basic yet important aspect of the neighborhood, especially for the two main members, UMAB and the hospital, who find themselves on opposite sides of issues and negotiations more often than not.
- * Common problems that involve the physical environment such as parking can be addressed jointly with all needs and concerns viewed simultaneously.
- * Baltimore City has pointed to **UniversityCenter** as a successful implementation of its revitalization plan. It is the only neighborhood out of six that has taken such an active implementation role.
- * Environmental improvements and the development of a

university community have occurred faster with this unity, than if only one institution were involved. The development of an enhanced university community might not have happened if each of the partners had not been involved from day one.

- * The UniversityCenter concept has brought attention to the member institutions, a better understanding of what we are about and our value to the city and the state.

IX. Application to Other University Communities

While the events that occurred enabling the development of UniversityCenter may be unique to the University of Maryland at Baltimore, there are some general tenets that apply to all university communities striving to create an identity and sense of place:

- * understand the political environment in which the university exists and make sure it is addressed.
- * determine and define the self interests that are at work in the environment.
- * attempt to identify similar or complementary goals within the university and then build upon them.
- * understand the economic value of the project to the university and the surrounding region.
- * recognize events, activities and opportunities that surround the university that may not be directly related to the project but may

impact it positively or negatively.

- * work with the community, local and state government officials early in the process. This should be done only after you know what it is you want to do.
- * identify problems and issues clearly; view them from different institutional perspectives.
- * establish goals and objectives that work toward a well-defined vision.
- * make sure each member institution or constituency benefits.
- * involve CEO's and key decision makers from the start.
- * form a work group to settle disputes before the go to policy makers.
- * Finally, always be ready to respond to casual inquiries and offers of assistance.